

THE
CRIES
OF THE
OPPRESSED,

Humbly Submitted to the Serious Consideration

OF THE
HONOURABLE THE
HOUSE of COMMONS:

OR

The very Hard Case of Insolvent and other Miserable Debtors set forth in their proper Colours; whereby the Nation may see it is every Man's Concern to prevent this Grand Grievance in *England*.

It being a Trip newly taken to the *Queens Bench*, the *Fleet*, and to all the Prisons within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, setting forth the Barbarous Villanies of Bums, Goalers, Judges Clarks, Lawyers, &c.

LONDON, Printed and Sold by the Booksellers, 1712.

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The Cries of the **OPPRESSED,** *Humbly*
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THE Glory of our Nation is our Laws duly Administred,
 which wou'd preserve every Man's Right and Property;
 but alas, amidst a cruel, bloody, and tumultuous People en-
 clin'd to Discord and Irreligion, how hardly is the Admini-
 stration of Justice duly performed.

Which said Grievance, the best and glorious of Queens (by her Lord
 Chancellor not long ago) complain'd of; therefore, with the humblest
 of submission the Author of these Lines begs pardon, since he cannot
 forbear (being an Antient Britain Born) to complain to the Represen-
 tatives of this Kingdom; That to his own knowledge, many
 Gentlemen, and others, are frequently murthered and Oppress'd con-
 tinually; contrary to all Laws of Nations, and more particularly against
Magna Charta; and we above all People exceed the most Inhumane
 Practices of barbarous Nations.

And that more particularly by Marshals, Wardens, and other Goal-
 ers, especially in that part of Great Britain call'd *Old England*; there-
 fore as a Service to his Country, his Duty to his Gracious Sovereign,
 and in justice to all Creditors, as well as Compassion to all miserable
 and insolvent Debtors, he begs leave to represent (and your Patience
 maturely to read) the horrid and unwarrantable practices of Goalers,
&c. as follows.

In the first place, it is evident that many Thousand Debtors are
 turn'd over and committed to the Queen's Bench and Fleet, nor can
 it be denyed, but that many of them are very ill Men, and have ef-
 fects to Answer in part their Creditors Demands, which no doubt is
 what the Debtors, when first in trouble, design to secure to their own
 use and behoof.

To which I answer, that abundance of Debtors have gone to these Prisons, thinking to move the Compassion of their Creditors, and especially to accept the utmost satisfaction they were capable to make; and having found the severity of the House, or Prison, so naturally were they then fond of Liberty (as indeed every Creature naturally is, but especially Man) that I may reasonably demand, what greater Blessing (Heaven only excepted) can we ask or demand.

But this dearly beloved Liberty, being dearly purchased, or bought, of the Goaler, proves generally the utter Ruin of the miserable Debtor, and wholly prevents the designed end of the severe and prosecuting Creditor; for when once a Man comes under a Goalers Arbitrary Power, he is surely lost for ever to all intents and purposes; for a Thousand ways those merciless Exacters find to glean, and eul, from him all he had thoughts of saving from his obdurate Creditors.

Every one knows Serjeants and Bayliffs are rude and mercenary, Tip-staffs are Brothers alike in Iniquity, Lawyers like Taylers increase their Bills, the Judges Clerks are so Charitable to the Poor, that they abate nothing of their Fees; Turn-keys, Marshalls, Wardens and Goalers, sweep all so clean, that nothing, nay hardly not a Fragment remains to be gleaned from the poor Debtor after them.

Perhaps, some will ask how this can be? and to inforce their Argument urge, why has the Wisdom of our Law-makers granted Rules to the Queen's-Bench and Fleet, and left it to the Care of the Marshal, &c. to dispose of the same according to his Discretion, or Security and Interest, and especially not to take all from the Prisoner.

To which I answer, that the Charity and good Design of those Laws are worth the highest Commendation, but the Intent of this Paper, is to shew what partial horrid things are done and committed contrary to the good Laws in being, and give me leave to let down some of the greatest Abuses crept in upon them, which I assure you are of so black a Die, as may very well deserve the curious Consideration of a wise, impartial, and examining Parliament.

First with humble Submission, if they please to enquire, it will be very proper for them to examin the Judges and other Office Books that are kept in the Temple, how many thousand Prisoners are committed yearly to Goal, to the Queen's-Bench, Fleet, and all other Prisons for Debt.

2ly, What Number are lawfully discharged annually.

3ly, That



gly, That the Marshal, Warden, &c. be required to produce all such Prisoners as are not lawfully released.

This Author does affirm of his own Knowledge and Experience, and dares take most of the Creditors in Great Britain to vouch with him, that the Marshal, Warden, &c. cannot produce one Prisoner, no not one out of Fifty, but either is in Execution, or otherwise who ought to be in their Rules, or Custody.

This may seem strange, but it is true, and the Reason you have had briefly before, the Goalers are avaritious without end, and as long as the Prisoner has a Bed or a Bolster, nay a Coat, or any thing he can make a Crown of left, so far extends the mercenary Humor of the Keeper, or Master, of the Prison; and thus is the Prisoner forced to part with his All for the sake of Liberty (a Word that has cost many Millions of Money, and a Hundred Thousand Lives buried in a Sea of Blood to defend the same.

And as all things are nothing compared to Freedom, especially considering what Horror it is to be lock'd up, when a Man is strip'd of all, when Friends have forsaken him (the common Consequence of but a short Imprisonment) and for want of Money to be lodg'd in a Chamber with Ten, sometimes Twelve or more, without any thing to lay a wearied Head and empty Body on, (but the bare Board), and there to be kept Week after Week, nay, Month after Month, until at length, by being starved, the unhappy Wretch falls into Convulsions in his Bowels, or some other sad effects of Penury and Want, so miserably Expires, over-spread with Vermin, unlamented, unless by poor Relations who cannot help; and which is worse, in the *Queens Bench* no Spiritual help is afforded, neither Chappel nor Chaplain are in use, unless, for base Marriages, altho' it is the *Queens Prison* belonging to so High a Court, and under the care of the best of Judges.

My last Words I wou'd recal, did I not believe, nay, know the current of Justice is purely stopp'd by the Corruption of Clerks, the Bribes of Goalers, to those false Servants who intercept almost every Petition or Letter, &c. which come from Oppressed Prisoners, intentionally for their Sage Masters, who seldom or never see them.

A Man that sees a Marshal, or a Warden, practice (especially) of late, wou'd think them profound for cruel Mischief! than *Machiavil*, or any Tyrant, that ever yet was Recorded for Inhumanity, or the vilest Oppression; nor do those sort of Cattle want their Emiffaries,

to

to say or swear, whatever upon occasion may serve a turn, to crush and invalidate the Testimony of Prisoners, who dare complain, altho' he be daily visibly a murdering by unlawful Usage, as starving for want of Charity, (which contrary to the Laws of the Land and the Benevolences of well disposed Christians) is kept from them, whilst the Goaler and his Creatures as Steward Turn-keys, &c. in Riotting and Drunkenness voluptuously consume what shou'd, according to the true Design of the Donor, preserve alive the unhappy Debtor, unhappy I say in all Respects.

First by incensed Creditors, and secondly by the unhuman Usage of the Goalers, who, in a word, keep none confined, but such as have not Money to purchase Liberty.

If these things were duly examined by those in Authority, I doubt not but a proper Remedy wou'd be found out to redress the great Abuses which tend to the Prejudice of the Queen's Strength and Power, who every Year loses many Subjects, that dreading the Goaler whom he can no longer bribe, as much or more than he does his Creditor whom he cannot pay, is forced to leave his Native Country, his Family, and in a strange Land to go to get a little Bread, and cares not to grow under such cruel and unlawful Oppression, as is no where to be found but in Great Britain.

This hard Case, The Truth of which may very easily be proved by many sad suffering Wretches almost in every Prison throughout England, to the unhappy Reproach of our Holy Religion, and the tender Regard, which surely is due for the maintaining the Right and Privilege of every the meanest Subject.

The Author may, as others have been, perhaps cruelly used and murdered for the publishing this brief Narrative, therefore craves leave to mention one Grievance more, which has so often covered the worst Cruelty of Goalers, which is, that lately when Prisoners have been starved or murdered, for both have happened in their turns, the Prisoner has been secretly buried by the Keepers Order (notwithstanding they were charged and in Execution) without the Coroners Inquest (or a Jury to examin) how they came by their Death, as the known Laws of this Land strictly enjoyns under severe Penalties; and no regard is taken to redress this Evil by some proper Persons to whom Complaint has been made.

And it may be sadly, altho' humbly conceived, that if a speedy Remedy be not applied to this Disease, the Practice may increase, and be

be fatal to the Lives of many, perhaps to some who now have a great deal in their Power towards the regulating such horrid Abuses, but by unforeseen Misfortunes, which attends Men of all Ranks and Degrees, may be exposed to the same sad Fate, for what's unlawfully to be done in the Fleet or Queen's-Bench, may by the same Stretch of a bad Man's Conscience, be committed in the Tower or any Goal of Great Britain.

Let every Mans Reason Judge, if these things are not his own Concern, being an Evil that no Man can be surely exempted from, but by the extraordinary Care and Vigilance of those in Authority, whom God preserve.

F I N I S.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

A Second Part of this Paper shewing the particular Abuses of Goalers, in Respect to both Debtor and Creditor, will be speedily Published for the Publick Good.

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 great deal in their power towards the regaining such hands - And
 but by the latter's Misfortune, which is the Misfortune of all the
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